

June 27, 2005

The Honorable Dennis Hastert
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Speaker Hastert and Minority Leader Pelosi:

We are writing to reiterate our strong support for passage of legislation to implement the Central America – Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR). The undersigned organizations and companies, which represent the overwhelming majority of the U.S. agriculture sector, strongly support the agreement and favor the prompt passage of that legislation.

In particular, we commend efforts that have been made to address fears that the agreement will have a negative impact on the U.S. sugar sector, and we are grateful to those Members of Congress who have worked hard to ensure that this Agreement is one that the overwhelming majority of U.S. agriculture can wholeheartedly support. We note that the Administration has gone to unprecedented lengths in the past weeks to allay those fears by guaranteeing to “hold harmless” the sugar industry for the life of the current farm bill. No other industry has received comparable assurances. We believe that you have worked tirelessly to address this issue without undermining the agreement and jeopardizing the interests of the rest of U. S. agriculture.

Yet despite these efforts, the sugar growers have issued a press release rejecting the Administration’s assurances and expressing continued opposition to CAFTA-DR. Their actions have demonstrated unwillingness to compromise, despite a sensible proposal that would provide the industry a guarantee that they would not be harmed. Their position unfairly endangers the benefits that could be realized by the rest of U.S. agriculture from this agreement.

We support CAFTA-DR because it would produce significant benefits for nearly every sector of U.S. agriculture.

Sincerely,

Agricultural and Food Transporters Conference
American Bakers Association
American Farm Bureau Federation
American Feed Industry Association

American Frozen Food Institute
American Meat Institute
American Peanut Product Manufacturers, Inc.
American Potato Trade Alliance
American Seed Trade Association
American Soybean Association
Animal Health Institute
Archer Daniels Midland
Biotechnology Industry Organization
Blue Diamond Growers
Bunge North America, Inc.
California Canning Peach Commission
California Fig Advisory Board
California Strawberry Commission
California Table Grape Commission
California Walnut Commission
Cargill, Incorporated
Corn Refiners Association
Crowley Maritime Corp.
Diamond of California
Distilled Spirits Council of the United States
Elanco
Food Marketing Institute
Food Products Association
Georgia Poultry Federation
Imperial Sugar Company
Institute of Shortening and Edible Oils
International Dairy Foods Association
Louis Dreyfus Corporation
National Barley Growers Association
National Black Farmers Association
National Cattlemen's Beef Association
National Chicken Council
National Confectioners Association
National Corn Growers Association
National Grain and Feed Association
National Grain Sorghum Producers
National Grain Trade Council
National Grange
National Milk Producers Federation
National Oilseed Processors Association

National Pork Producers Council
National Potato Council
National Renderers Association
National Turkey Federation
North American Equipment Dealers Association
North American Export Grain Association
North American Millers' Association
Northwest Horticultural Council
Ocean Spray Cranberries, Inc.
Pet Food Institute
Produce Marketing Association
Snack Food Association
Sunmaid Growers of California
Sunsweet Growers, Inc.
The Fertilizer Institute
US Livestock Genetics Export, Inc.
United Egg Producers
United States Dry Bean Council
US Dairy Export Council
US Hide, Skin and Leather Association
US Meat Export Federation
USA Poultry and Egg Export Council
USA Rice Federation
Valley Fig Growers
Washington State Potato Commission
Western Growers Association
Wheat Export Trade Education Committee
WineAmerica